



Jones Lake State Park



Jordan Lake State Recreation Area



Dismal Swamp State Park

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS

Naturally Wonderful

South Mountains State Park

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The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation is a division of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

John E Skvarla, III
Secretary

Pat McCrory
Governor

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North Carolina's state parks are "Naturally Wonderful" and also wonderfully diverse. With 41 state park units, the system stretches from the highest sand dune on the East Coast at Jockey's Ridge to Mount Mitchell, the highest point in the eastern United States. Between these points, you'll find mysterious bay lakes, wild swamps, rare sandhills, piedmont river systems and bold mountain streams.

The parks system was established in 1916 when a group of citizens sought to protect the summit of Mount Mitchell. It became the first state park in the Southeast and among the first in the nation. Many of the state parks were initiated by local citizens with a strong conservation ethic.

More than 14 million people visit the state parks each year. The state parks system employs park rangers and park superintendents who are commissioned law enforcement officers.

Education is also a hallmark of North Carolina state parks. Rangers offer free interpretive programs that reveal the marvels of each park. Many parks have state-of-the-art visitor centers and exhibit halls to help you explore North Carolina's cultural and natural heritage.

Conservation, recreation and education are what North Carolina state parks are all about. A visit to any of them can show you why they are "Naturally Wonderful!"



We're social

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www.ncparks.gov



Fort Macon State Park



Stone Mountain State Park



Raven Rock State Park



Fort Fisher State Recreation Area

Education and Kids

Did you know that many plants atop Mount Mitchell are rare in North Carolina, but common in Quebec? Did you know that the giant sand dunes at Jockey's Ridge are constantly moving? Do you know how to safely hold a crayfish? Interpretation & Education programs help reveal what makes North Carolina state parks *Naturally Wonderful*.

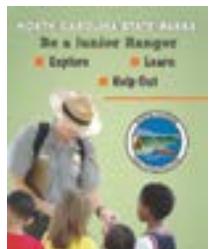


Discover More with a Ranger

From fishing lessons to astronomy programs, from tree identification hikes to guided canoe paddles—parks offer programs for all ages. Visit www.ncparks.gov for a list of upcoming programs.

Junior Rangers

Junior Ranger guides are geared for ages 6-12. Kids do fun activities and attend ranger programs to earn a special patch. Ask about the program at a park office or download the guide at www.ncparks.gov.



Reservations

A full-service, online- and call center-based reservations system can be used to reserve campsites, picnic shelters and other park facilities. Where reservations are offered, there are requirements for advance notice and minimum and maximum stays.

www.ncparks.gov
I-877-7-CAMPNC
 (1-877-722-6762)

Park gates may be locked each night when the park closes. So, make sure you understand the gate policies at the park and plan accordingly when arranging your arrival time and when making daytime excursions outside the park.

Parks & Recreation Trust Fund

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund provides support to improve the quality of life for North Carolinians by preserving the state's natural resources and developing public parks and recreation facilities. Since its creation in 1994, trust fund grants have conserved more than 40,000 acres of state parkland and parks have been developed with new facilities such as visitor centers, campgrounds, improved trails, swim areas and educational exhibits. The trust fund is the primary funding source for adding to and improving state parks.

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund also provides grant funds for local governments to improve recreation opportunities. Projects have included diverse recreation initiatives from playgrounds to community centers to greenways. Visit the trust fund's Website at www.ncparks.gov/partf



Our Mission

The North Carolina State Parks System exists for the enjoyment, education, health and inspiration of all our citizens and visitors.

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation is:

- to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;
- to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina; and,
- to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources for all citizens and visitors in North Carolina.

The North Carolina parks system's Website gives complete information on each of our parks as well as programs of the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation. You'll find maps that can be downloaded plus details on park facilities, fees, reservations and special outdoor activities such as cycling, kayaking and rock climbing. Contact information for each park is provided as well as an up-to-date calendar of educational programs and special events. Check it out before your visit at www.ncparks.gov.

We also offer specialized brochures for many of our parks. These brochures include park maps and describe facilities in detail as well as the unique natural and historic aspects of the park. Just contact the park office or our Raleigh office at 919-707-9300, or email us at parkinfo@ncmail.net.



About our parks...

In North Carolina, we like to call our state parks "Naturally Wonderful!" For us, this is more than a catch phrase. It indicates how we develop and manage our state parks and recreation areas.

It has to do with our mission statement on the facing page, which, in turn, evolved from our state's constitution. Our principal mission is to preserve and protect the stunning natural resources in North Carolina. The Division strives to balance the protection of the more than 223,000 acres of parkland in our system while providing high quality outdoor recreation. We have developed these parks cautiously with this idea in mind. While there are myriad recreational opportunities, our mission demands relatively low-impact activities. We have been careful to arrange campgrounds and park amenities to complement, rather than compete with the natural features that attract so many visitors.

While visiting our state parks, you'll find that fees for camping, swimming and other park activities are very reasonable. Early on, the people of North Carolina decided that the state's array of natural treasures should be enjoyed by as many as possible. Enjoy your exploration of North Carolina's state parks.

Please visit our Website for a complete list of new parks under development and other types of units, including our 20 state natural areas.



Lake James State Park

Trails Program

The North Carolina Trails Program helps volunteers, nonprofit groups and government agencies plan, develop and manage greenways, routes for hiking, biking and horseback riding, as well as water trails and off-road vehicle trails. The program administers the federal Recreational Trails Program, which provides grants to non-profit organizations and governmental agencies for a variety of trail projects. www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_grants.php

The trails program is also planning, promoting and developing a system of trails across North Carolina and the flagship trail for this statewide effort is North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea State Trail. The trail will connect Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State Park when complete, a distance of some 1,000 miles. www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_mst.php

Rules and Safety

We're serious about safety. Follow these tips to make your visit to North Carolina's state parks a safe and rewarding experience.

- Park speed limits are 25 mph unless otherwise posted. Watch for pedestrians, bicyclists and wildlife.
- Don't swim alone or exceed your swimming abilities.
- Supervise children at all times and equip them with personal flotation devices when playing around water.
- Dress properly. Check with park staff regarding weather and terrain.
- Make your plans known to park staff and family members should you plan a long hike.
- Allow plenty of time for hikes as daylight hours shorten so you won't be caught by darkness.
- Stay on designated trails and away from streams, waterfalls and cliff faces.

Here are some of the more common regulations for the protection of our parks and our visitors. Check with the park office for other rules pertaining to specific parks. A complete set of regulations is posted at the park office.

- Feeding wildlife is prohibited. Animals can be dangerous and carry disease. Report unusual behavior to park staff.
- The removal of any plant, animal, rock or artifact is prohibited.
- Areas managed by North Carolina State Parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting or trapping is prohibited.
- Pets must be on an attended leash six feet or less. Pets aren't allowed in public buildings, bathhouses or swimming areas.
- Boating and fishing regulations of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission are enforced. Appropriate licenses for freshwater, saltwater and trout fishing are required.
- Firearms and other weapons are prohibited except that those with a proper permit may possess a concealed handgun in permitted areas & under the requirements of North Carolina G.S. 14-415.11. All firearms and weapons are prohibited in state park visitor centers and offices. Persons acting under this exception should take notice that certain Division managed properties are owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and subject to separate regulations governing firearms. Accordingly, concealed handguns are prohibited at Falls, Jordan and Kerr Lake State Recreation Areas.
- Fires are permitted in designated areas only.
- Camping is permitted in designated areas, by permit only.
- The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- Swimming is permitted in designated areas only.

Support State Parks

The North Carolina state park store is the only online location for official state parks merchandise. We hope these items remind you of your visit. Take a moment to browse and remember. Your purchase helps to support our "Naturally Wonderful" state parks.

www.ncparkstore.com

Support North Carolina state parks with a license plate. There is a \$30 fee in addition to regular license fees (\$60 for personalized plates). Additional fees support the Friends of State Parks. www.ncfp.org

Contact the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles to purchase a plate. www.ncdot.org/dmv/



